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HOME-FOLKS

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HOME-FOLKS

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY



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TO
MYRON W. REED



. . . "In this business I knew that I had the world, the planets, and the myriad stars for my companions, and we were all journeying along together fulfilling the same divine order."

—JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

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HOME-FOLKS

PROEM

*You Home-Folks:—Aid your grateful guest—
Bear with his pondering, wandering ways:
When idlest he is busiest,
Being a dreamer of the days.*

*Humor his silent, absent moods—
His restless quests along the shores
Of the old creek, wound through the woods,
The haws, pawpaws and sycamores:*

*The side-path home—the back-way past
The old pump and the dipper there;
The afternoon of dreamy June—
The old porch, and the rocking-chair.*

*Yea, bear with him a little space—
His heart must smoulder on a while
Ere yet it flames out in his face
A wholly tearless smile.*

HOME-FOLKS

HOME-FOLKS!—Well, that-air name, to me,
Sounds jis the same as *poetry*—
That is, ef poetry is jis
As sweet as I've hearn tell it is!

Home-Folks—they're jis the same as *kin*—
All brung up, same as *we* have bin,
Without no overpowerin' sense
Of their oncommon consequence!

They've bin to school, but not to git
The habit fastened on 'em yit
So as to ever interfere
With *other* work 'at's waitin' here:

Home-Folks has crops to plant and plow,
Er lives in town and keeps a cow;
But whether country-jakes er town-,
They know when eggs is up er down!

HOME-FOLKS

La! can't you *spot* 'em—when you meet
'Em *anywheres*—in field er street?
And can't you see their faces, bright
As circus-day, heave into sight?

And can't you hear their "Howdy!" clear
As a brook's chuckle to the ear,
And allus find their laughin' eyes
As fresh and clear as morning skies?

And can't you—when they've gone away
Jis feel 'em shakin' hands, all day?
And feel, too, you've bin higher raised
By sich a meetin'?—God be praised!

Oh, Home-Folks! you're the best of all
'At ranges this terestchul ball,—
But, north er south, er east er west,
It's home is where you're at your best.—

HOME-FOLKS

It's home—it's home your faces shine,
In-nunder your own fig and vine—
Your fambly and your neighbors 'bout
Ye, and the latchstring hangin' out.

.

Home-Folks—*at home*,—I know o' one
Old feller now 'at haint got none.—
Invite him—he may hold back some—
But *you* invite him, and he'll come.

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

1898

I

OLD GLORY! say, who,
By the ships and the crew,
And the long, blended ranks of the gray and the
blue,—

Who gave you, Old Glory, the name that you bear
With such pride everywhere

As you cast yourself free to the rapturous air
And leap out full-length, as we're wanting you
to?—

Who gave you that name, with the ring of the
same,

And the honor and fame so becoming to you?—
Your stripes stroked in ripples of white and of red,
With your stars at their glittering best overhead—
By day or by night
Their delightfulest light

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

Laughing down from their little square heaven of
blue!—

Who gave you the name of Old Glory?—say,
who—

Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

*The old banner lifted, and faltering then
In vague lisps and whispers fell silent again.*

II

Old Glory,—speak out!—we are asking about
How you happened to “favor” a name, so to say,
That sounds so familiar and careless and gay
As we cheer it and shout in our wild breezy way—
We—the *crowd*, every man of us, calling you that—
We—Tom, Dick and Harry—each swinging his hat
And hurrahing “Old Glory!” like you were our
kin,

When—*Lord!*—we all know we’re as common as
sin!

And yet it just seems like you *humor* us all
And waft us your thanks, as we hail you and fall
Into line, with you over us, waving us on
Where our glorified, sanctified betters have gone.—

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

And this is the reason we're wanting to know—
(And we're wanting it *so*!—
Where our own fathers went we are willing to
go.)—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory—O-ho!—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

*The old flag unfurled with a billowy thrill
For an instant, then wistfully sighed and was
still.*

III

Old Glory: the story we're wanting to hear
Is what the plain facts of your christening were,—
For your name—just to hear it,
Repeat it, and cheer it, 's a tang to the spirit
As salt as a tear;—
And seeing you fly, and the boys marching by,
There's a shout in the throat and a blur in the eye
And an aching to live for you always—or die,
If, dying, we still keep you waving on high.
And so, by our love
For you, floating above,

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

And the scars of all wars and the sorrows thereof,
Who gave you the name of Old Glory, and why
Are we thrilled at the name of Old Glory?

*Then the old banner leaped, like a sail in the blast,
And fluttered an audible answer at last.—*

IV

And it spake, with a shake of the voice, and it
said:—

By the driven snow-white and the living blood-red
Of my bars, and their heaven of stars overhead—
By the symbol conjoined of them all, skyward cast,
As I float from the steeple, or flap at the mast,
Or droop o'er the sod where the long grasses nod,—
My name is as old as the glory of God.

. . . . So I came by the name of Old Glory.

MISTER HOP-TOAD

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out!
Bin a month o' Sund'ys sence I seen you hereabout.
Kind o' bin a-layin' in, from the frost and snow?
Good to see you out ag'in, it's bin so long ago!
Plows like slicin' cheese, and sod's loppin' over
even;
Loam's like gingerbread, and clods's softer 'n de-
ceivin' —
Mister Hop-Toad, honest-true — Springtime —
don't you love it?
You old rusty rascal you, at the bottom of it!

Oh, oh, oh!
I grabs up my old hoe;
But I sees *you*,
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

MISTER HOP-TOAD

Make yourse'f more comfo'bler—square 'round at
your ease—
Don't set saggin' slanchwise, with your nose below
your knees.
Swell that fat old throat o' yourn and lemme see
you swaller;
Straighten up and h'ist your head!—*You* don't
owe a dollar!—
Hain't no mor'gage on your land—ner no taxes,
nuther;
You don't haf to work no roads, even ef you'd
ruther.
'F I was you, and *fixed* like you, I raily wouldn't
keer
To swop fer life and hop right in the presidential
cheer!

Oh, oh, oh!
I hauls back my old hoe;
But I sees *you*,
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad? How-dee-do!"

MISTER HOP-TOAD

'Long about next Aprile, hoppin' down the furry,
Won't you mind I ast you what 'peared to be the
hurry?—

Won't you mind I hooked my hoe and hauled you
back and smiled?—

W'y, bless you, Mister Hop-Toad, I love you like
a child!

S'pose I'd want to 'flict you any more'n what you
air?—

S'pose I think you got no rights 'cept the warts
you wear?

Hulk, sulk, and blink away, you old bloat-eyed
rowdy!—

Hain't you got a word to say?—Won't you tell
me "Howdy"?

Oh, oh, oh!

I swish round my old hoe;

But I sees *you*,

And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

OUR BOYHOOD HAUNTS

Ho! I'm going back to where
We were youngsters.—Meet me there,
Dear old barefoot chum, and we
Will be as we used to be,—
Lawless rangers up and down
The old creek beyond the town—
Little sunburnt gods at play,
Just as in that far-away:—
Water nymphs, all unafraid,
Shall smile at us from the brink
Of the old millrace and wade
Tow'rd us as we kneeling drink
At the spring our boyhood knew,
Pure and clear as morning-dew:
And, as we are rising there,
Doubly dow'rd to hear and see,
We shall thus be made aware
Of an eerie piping, heard
High above the happy bird

OUR BOYHOOD HAUNTS

In the hazel: And then we,
Just across the creek, shall see
(Hah! the goaty rascal!) Pan
Hoof it o'er the sloping green,
Mad with his own melody,
Aye, and (bless the beastly man!)
Stamping from the grassy soil
Bruisèd scents of *fleur-de-lis*,
Boneset, mint and pennyroyal.

THE HOME-VOYAGE

GENERAL HENRY W. LAWTON—FELL AT SAN
MATEO, DEC. 19, 1899. IN STATE, IN-
DIANAPOLIS, FEB. 6, 1900.

BEAR with us, O Great Captain, if our pride
Show equal measure with our grief's excess
In greeting you in this your helplessness
To countermand our vanity or hide
Your stern displeasure that we thus had tried
To praise you, knowing praise was your distress :
But this homecoming swells our hearts no less—
Because for love of home you proudly died.
Lo! then, the cable, fathoms 'neath the keel
That shapes your course, is eloquent of you ;
The old flag, too, at half-mast overhead—
We doubt not that its gale-kissed ripples feel
A prouder sense of red and white and blue,—
The stars—Ah, God, were *they* interpreted!

THE HOME-VOYAGE

In strange lands were your latest honors won—
In strange wilds, with strange dangers all beset;
With rain, like tears, the face of day was wet,
As rang the ambushed foeman's fateful gun:
And as you felt your final duty done,
We feel *that* glory thrills your spirit yet,—
When at the front, in swiftest death, you met
The patriot's doom and best reward in one.
And so the tumult of that island war,
At last, for you, is stilled forevermore—
Its scenes of blood blend white as ocean foam
On your rapt vision as you sight afar
The sails of peace, and from that alien shore
The proud ship bears you on your voyage home.

Or rough or smooth the wave, or lowering day
Or starlit sky—you hold, by native right,
Your high tranquillity—the silent might
Of the true hero—so you led the way
To victory through stormiest battle-fray,
Because your followers, high above the fight,
Heard your soul's lightest whisper bid them smite
For God and man and space to kneel and pray.

THE HOME-VOYAGE

And thus you cross the seas unto your own
Beloved land, convoyed with honors meet,
Saluted as your home's first heritage—
Nor salutation from your State alone,
But *all* the States, gathered in mighty fleet,
Dip colors as you move to anchorage.

UNCLE SIDNEY'S LOGIC

PA wunst he scold' an' says to me,—

“Don't *play* so much, but try
To *study* more, and nen you'll be
A great man, by an' by.”

Nen Uncle Sidney says, “You let
Him *be* a boy an' play.—

The greatest man on earth, I bet,
'Ud trade with him today!”

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

AS CREATED

*There's a space for good to bloom in
Every heart of man or woman,—
And however wild or human,
Or however brimmed with gall,
Never heart may beat without it;
And the darkest heart to doubt it
Has something good about it
After all.*

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Scene—Hoosier R. R. station, Washout Glen.

Night—Interior of Telegraph Office—Single operator's table in some disorder—lunch-basket, litter of books and sheet-music—a flute and a guitar—Rather good-looking young man, evidently in charge, talking to commercial traveler.

JUNCTION-Station—Pilot Knob—

Say "the operator there

Is a *girl*—with auburn hair

And blue eyes, and purty, too,

As they make 'em!"—That'll do!—

They *all* know her 'long the Line—

Railroad men, from President

Of the road to section-hand!—

And she knows *us*—the whole mob

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Of us *lightnin'-slingers*—Shoo!—
Brownie's got us all down fine!
Though she's *business*, understand,
Brownie she just beats the band!
Brownie she's held up that job
Five or six years anyhow—
Since her *father's* death, when all
The whole road decided now
Was no time for nothin' small,—
It was *Brownie's* job! Since ten
Years of age she'd been with *him*
In the office. Now, I guess,
She was sixteen, more or less—
Just a girl, but strong and trim,
And as independent, too,
And *reliable* clean through
As the old man when he died
Two mile' up the track beside
His red-light, one icy night
When the line broke down—and yet
He got there in time, you bet,
To shut off a wreck all right!

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Yes, *some* life here, and romance—
Pilot Knob, though, and Roachdale,
And this little eight-by-ten
Dinky town of Washout Glen
Have to pool inhabitants
Even for enough young men
To fill out a country dance,—
All chip in on some joint-date,
And whack up and pony down
And *combine* and celebrate,—
Say, on Decoration Day—
Fourth o' July—Easter, or
Circus-Day, or *Christmas*, say—
All *three* towns, and right-o'-way
For two extrys,—one from here—
One down from the Knob. Well, then
Roachdale is herself again!
Like *last* Christmas, when all three
Towns colloqued, and far and near
Billed things for a Christmas-tree
At old Roachdale. Now mark here:—

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

I had leave, last Holidays,
And was goin' home, you see,
Two weeks—and the Company
Sent a man to fill my place—
An old *chum* of mine, in fact,
I'd been coixin' to arrange
Just to have his dressin'-case
And his latest music packed
And come on here for a change.
He'd been here to visit me
Once before—in *summer then*,—
Come to stay "just two or three
Days," he said—and he staid *ten*.
When he left here *then*—Well, he
Was clean gone on Brownie—wild
And plum silly as a child!
Name—MacClintock. Most young men
Stood 'way back when Mac was round.
Fact is, he was *fine*, you know—
Silver-tenor voice that went
Up among the stars, and sent
The girls back to higher-tone'
Dreams than they had ever known!
A good-looker—stylish—slim—

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

And wore clothes that no man downed—
Yes, and smoked a good cigar
And smelt right; and used to blow
A smooth flute—And a *guitar*
No man heard till he heard *him*!—
Say, some midnight serenade—
Oomh! how drippin'-sweet he played!
Boys, though, wasn't stuck on Mac
So blame much,—especially
Roachdale operator.—He
Kind o' had the inside-track
On *all* of us, as to who
Got most talk from Brownie, when
She had nothin' else to do
But to buzz us now and then
Up and down the wires, you know;
And we'd jolly back again
'Bout some dance—and "Would she go
With *us* or her *Roachdale* beau?"
(*Boys* all called him "Roachy"—see?)—
Wire her, "Was she 'Happy now?' "
And "How's 'Roachy,' anyhow?"
Or, "Say, Brownie, who's the jay
You was stringin' yesterday?"

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

And I've sat here when this key
Shot me like a battery,
Just 'cause Brownie wired to say
That "That box o' fruit, or flowers,
That 'I'd' sent her came O K,—
To beguile the weary hours
Till we met again!"—Then break
Short off—for the Roachdale cuss
Callin' her, and onto us.
'Course *he'd* sent 'em—no mistake!
Lord, she kept that man awake!
Yet he kept *her* fooled: His cheek
And pure goody-goody gall
Hid from *her*—if not from all—
A quite vivid "*yellow streak*."—
Awful' jealous, don't you see?—
Felt he had a *right* to be,
Maybe, bein' *engaged*.—And they
Were engaged—that's straight.—"G A!"*—
Well: MacClintock when *he* come
Down from York to take this job,
And stopped off at Pilot Knob

*Telegraphers' abbreviation for "*Go ahead*."

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

For "*instructions*," there was some
Indications of unrest
At *Roachdale* right from the start,—
"Roachy" wasn't *awful* smart,
Maybe, but he done his best—
With such brains as he possessed,—
Anyway he made *one* play
That was brilliant—of its kind—
And *maintained* it—From the day
That MacClintock took my key
And I left on No. 3,
"Roachy" opened up on Mac
And just *loved* him!—purred and whined
'Cross the wires how tickled he
Was to hear that *Mac* was back,
And how glad the *girls* would be
And the young-folks everywhere,
As he'd reason to believe,—
And how, even *then*, they were
'Shapin' things at old Roachdale
For a blow-out, Christmas-eve,
That would turn all others pale!—
First a *Christmas-Tree*, at old

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Armory Hall, and then the floor
Cleared, and—”

“Come in out the cold!”

Breaks MacClintock—“Don’t I know?—
Dancin’, say, from ten till four—
Maybe *daylight* ’fore we go!—
With Ben Custer’s Band to pour
Music out in swirlin’ rills
And back-tides o’ waltz-quadrilles
Level with the window-sills!—
Roachy, you’re a *bird*!—But, say,—
How am I to get away
From the office here?”

Well, then

“Roachy” wires him back again:—
“That’s O K,—I call a *man*
Up from *Dunkirk*; got it all
Fixed.—So Christmas-eve, you can
Collar the seven-thirty train
For Roachdale—the same that *he*
Comes on.—Leave your office-key
In the door: he’ll do the rest.”
Then “old Roachy” rattled through
A long list of who’d be there,—

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Boys and girls that Mac knew best—
One name, though, that had no bare
Little mention anywhere!
Then he shut off, as he said,
For his supper About ten
Minutes *Mac* was *called again*—
With a click that flushed him red
As the signal-flag—and then
Came like music in the air—
“Yes, and *Brownie* will be there!”

Folks tell *me*, that Christmas-Tree,
Dance and whole blame jamboree,
Looked like it was goin' to be
A blood-curdlin' tragedy.
People 'long the *roads*, you know—
Well, they've had experience
With all sorts of *accidents*,
And they've learnt *some* things,—and so
When an accident or wreck
Happens, they know *some man's* “*break*”
Is responsible, and hence—
Well—they want to *break* his *neck*!

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

So it happened, Christmas-eve,
At *Roachdale*,—MacClintock there
Cocked back in the barber-chair
At eight-forty, and no train
Down yet from the Knob, and it
Due at eight-ten sharp. The strain
Was a-showin' quite a bit
On the general crowd; and when
Purty soon the rumor spread—
Wreck had probably occurred—
Someone said somebody said
That he'd heard somebody say,
“*Operator* at the *Glen*
Was to blame for the delay—
Fact is, he had run away
From his office—Even then
Was in *Roachdale*—there to be
Present at the Christmas-Tree
And the ‘shindig’ afterward,
Wreck or *no wreck!*” . . . *Mac* sat up,
Whiter than the shavin'-cup. . . .
Back of *his* face in the glass
He stared into he could see

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

A big crowd there—and, alas!
Not in all that threatening throng
One friend's face of sympathy—
One friend knowin' right from wrong!
He got on his feet—erect—
Nervy;—faced the crowd, and then
Said: "*I* am MacClintock from
The Glen-office, and I've come
To your Christmas festival
By request of one that all
Of you honor, gentlemen,—
Your most trusted citizen—
Your own operator here
At the station-office—where
He'll acquit *me* of neglect,
And will make it plain and clear
Who the sub. is he sent there
To my office at the Glen—
Or, if *not* one there,—who then
Is indeed the criminal? . . .
I am going now to call
On him.—Join me, gentlemen.—

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

I insist you come with me.”
Well, a sense of some respect
Caught 'em,—and they followed, all,
Silently, though sullenly.

Fortunately, half a square
Brought 'em to the station and
The crowd there that packed the small
Waiting-room on every hand,
With a kind o' general stand
Round the half-door window through
Which “old Roachy,” in full view,
Sat there, smilin' in a sick
Sort o' way, yet gloryin', too,
In the work he had to do.
Mac worked closer, breathin' quick
At the muttered talk of some
Of the toughest of the crowd;
Till, above the growl and hum
Of the ominous voices, he
Heard the click of “Roachy's” key,—
And his heart beat 'most out 'loud
As he heard him wirin':—“Yes,

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Trouble down at *Glen*, I guess.
Glen's fool-operator *here*—
What's-his-name?—MacClintock.—Fear
Mob will hang him.—Mob knows he
Left his office.—And no doubt
Wreck there on account of it.
People worked-up here—and shout
Now and then to 'Take him out!'—
'Hang him'!—and so forth." . . . Mac lit
Through the half-door window at
'Roachy's' table like a cat:—
He was *white*, but '*Roachy's*' face
Made a brunette out o' *his*! . . .
Mac had pinned him in his chair
Helpless—and a message there
Clickin' back from Pilot Knob.—
"Tell these people, word for word,"
Mac says, "what this message is!—
Tell 'em.—Hear me?" 'Roachy' heard
And obeyed:—"We sized your job
On MacClintock.—*Knob* here sent
A sub. there.—And all O K
At Glen office.—Tie-up *here*—
One hour's wait—all fault of *mine*.

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

'*Hang* MacClintock,' did you say?
'*Hang* MacClintock?'—Certainly,—
Hang him on the Christmas-Tree,
With a label on for *me*,—
I'll be there on Number Nine.' "

LET SOMETHING GOOD BE SAID

WHEN over the fair fame of friend or foe
The shadow of disgrace shall fall; instead
Of words of blame, or proof of thus and so,
Let something good be said.

Forget not that no fellow-being yet
May fall so low but love may lift his head:
Even the cheek of shame with tears is wet,
If something good be said.

No generous heart may vainly turn aside
In ways of sympathy; no soul so dead
But may awaken strong and glorified,
If something good be said.

And so I charge ye, by the thorny crown,
And by the cross on which the Savior bled,
And by your own souls' hope of fair renown,
Let something good be said!

MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER

WHAT is it in old fiddle-chunes 'at makes me ketch
my breath

And ripples up my backbone tel I'm tickled most
to death?—

Kindo' like that sweet-sick feelin', in the long
sweep of a swing,

The first you ever swung in, with yer first sweet-
heart, i jing!—

Yer first picnic—yer first ice-cream—yer first o'
ever'thing

'At happened 'fore yer dancin'-days wuz over!

I never understood it—and I s'pose I never can,—
But right in town here, yisterd'y, I heerd a pore
blind-man

A-fiddlin' old "Gray Eagle"—*And*-sir! I jes
stopped my load

O'hay and listened at him—yes, and watched the
way he "bow'd,"—

MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER

And back I went, plum forty year', with boys
and girls I knowed

And loved, long 'fore my dancin'-days wuz
over!—

At high noon in yer city,—with yer blame Mag-
netic-Cars

A-hummin' and a-screetchin' past—and bands and
G. A. R.'s

A-marchin'—and fire-ingines.—*All* the noise,
the whole street through,

Wuz lost on me!—I only heerd a whipperwill
er two,

It 'peared-like, kindo' callin' 'crost the darkness
and the dew,

Them nights afore my dancin'-days wuz over.

T'uz Chused'y-night at Wetherell's, er We'nsd'y-
night at Strawn's,

Er Fourth-o'-July-night at uther Tomps's house
er John's!—

MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER

With old Lew Church from Sugar Crick, with
that old fiddle he
Had sawed clean through the Army, from At-
lanty to the sea—
And yit he'd fetched her home ag'in, so's he
could play fer me
Onc't more afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

The woods 'at's all ben cut away wuz growin'
same as then;
The youngsters all wuz boys ag'in 'at's now all
oldish men;
And all the girls 'at ~~then~~ wuz girls—I saw 'em,
one and all,
As ~~plain~~ as then—the middle-sized, the short-
and-fat, and tall—
And, 'peared-like, I danced "Tucker" fer 'em
up and down the wall
Jes like afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

.

MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER

Yer *po-leece* they can holler "Say! *you*, Uncle!
drive ahead!—

You can't use *all* the right-o'-way!"—fer that wuz
what they said!—

But, jes the same,—in spite of all 'at you call
"interprise

And prog-gress of *you-folks* Today," we're all
of *fambly-ties*—

We're all got feelin's fittin' fer the *tears* 'at's in
our eyes

Er the *smiles* afore our dancin'-days is over.

HENRY W. GRADY

ATLANTA, DEC. 23, 1889

TRUE-HEARTED friend of all true friendliness!—

Brother of all true brotherhoods!—Thy hand

And its late pressure now we understand

Most fully, as it falls thus gestureless

And Silence lulls thee into sweet excess

Of sleep. Sleep thou content!—Thy loved

Southland

Is swept with tears, as rain in sunshine; and

Through all the frozen North our eyes confess

Like sorrow—seeing still the princely sign

Set on thy lifted brow, and the rapt light

Of the dark, tender, melancholy eyes—

Thrilled with the music of those lips of thine,

And yet the fire thereof that lights the night

With the white splendor of thy prophecies.

“O LIFE! O BEYOND!”

STRANGE—strange, O mortal Life,
The perverse gifts that came to me from you!
From childhood I have wanted *all* good things:
 You gave me few.

You gave me faith in One
Divine—above your own imperious might,
O mortal Life, while I but wanted you
 And your delight.

I wanted dancing feet,
And flowery, grassy paths by laughing streams;
You gave me loitering steps, and eyes all blurred
 With tears and dreams.

I wanted love,—and, lo!
As though in mockery, you gave me loss.
O'erburdened sore, I wanted rest: you gave
 The heavier cross.

“O LIFE! O BEYOND!”

I wanted one poor hut
For mine own home, to creep away into:
You gave me only lonelier desert lands
To journey through.

Now, at the last vast verge
Of barren age, I stumble, reel, and fling
Me down, with strength all spent and heart athirst
And famishing.

Yea, now, Life, deal me death,—
Your worst—your vaunted worst! . . . Across
my breast
With numb and fumbling hands I gird me for
The best.

“HOME AG’IN”

HIS LOVE OF HOME

*"As love of native land," the old man said,
"Er stars and stripes a-wavin' overhead,
Er nearest kith-and-kin, er daily bread,
A Hoosier's love is fer the old homestead."*

“HOME AG’IN”

I’M a-feelin’ ruther sad,
Fer a father proud and glad
As *I* am—my only child
Home, and all so rickonciled!
Feel so strange-like, and don’t know
What the mischief ails me so!
’Stid o’ bad, I ort to be
Feelin’ good pertickerly—
Yes, and extry thankful, too,
’Cause my nearest kith and kin ,
My Elviry’s schoolin’ ’s through,
And I’ got her home ag’in—
Home ag’in with me!

Same as ef her mother’d been
Livin’, I have done my best
By the girl, and watchfulest;

“HOME AG’IN”

Nussed her—keerful’ as I could—
From a baby, day and night,—
Drawin’ on the neighborhood
And the women-folks as light
As needsessity ’u’d ’low—
‘Cept in “teethin’,” onc’t, and fight
Through black-measles. Don’t know now
How we ever saved the child!
Doc *he’d* give her up, and said,
As I stood there by the bed
Sort o’ foolin’ with her hair
On the hot, wet pillar there,
“Wuz no use!”—And at them-air
Very words she waked and smiled—
Yes, and *knowed* me. And that’s where
I broke down, and simply jes
Bellered like a boy—I guess!—
Women claimed I did, but I
Allus helt I didn’t cry
But wuz laughin’,—and I *wuz*,—
Men don’t cry like *women* does!
Well, right then and there I felt
’T ’uz her mother’s doin’s, and,
Jes lik to myse’f, I knelt

“HOME AG’IN”

Whisperin,’ “I understand.” . . .
So I’ve raised her, you might say,
Stric’ly in the narrer way
’At her mother walked therein—
Not so quite religiously,
Yit still strivin’-like to do
Ever’thing a father *could*
Do he knowed the *mother* would
Ef she’d lived—And now all’s through
And I’ got her home ag’in—
Home ag’in with me!

And I’ been so lonesome, too,
Here o’ late, especially,—
“Old Aunt Abigail,” you know,
Ain’t no company;—and so
Jes the hired hand, you see—
Jonas—like a relative
More—sence he come here to live
With us, nigh ten year’ ago.
Still he don’t count much, you know,

“HOME AG’IN”

In the way o’ company—
Lonesome, ’peared-like, ’most as me!
So, as *I* say, I’ been so
Special lonesome-like and blue,
With Elviry, like she’s been,
’Way so much, last two or three
Year’—But now she’s home ag’in—
Home ag’in with me!

Driv in fer her yisterday,
Me and Jonas—gay and spry,—
We jes cut up, all the way!—
Yes, and sung!—tell, blame it! I
Keyed my voice up ’bout as high
As when—days ’at I wuz young—
“Buckwheat-notes” wuz all they sung.
Jonas bantered me, and ’greed
To sing one ’at town-folks sing
Down at Split Stump ’er High-Low—
Some new “ballet,” said, ’at he’d
Learnt—about “The Grapevine Swing.”
And when *he* quit, *I* begun

“HOME AG’IN”

To chune up my voice and run
Through the what’s-called “scales” and
“do-

Sol-me-fa’s” I *ust* to know—

Then let loose old favorite one,

“Hunters o’ Kentucky!” *My!*

Tel I thought the boy would *die!*

And we *both* laughed—Yes, and still

Heerd more laughin’, top the hill;

Fer we’d missed Elviry’s train,

And she’d lit out ’crosst the fields,—

Dewdrops dancin’ at her heels,

And cut up old Smoots’s lane

So’s to meet us. And there in

Shadder o’ the chinkypin,

With a danglin’ dogwood-bough

Bloomin’ ’bove her—See her now!—

Sunshine sort o’ flickerin’ down

And a kind o’ laughin’ all

Round her new red parasol,

Tryin’ to git at *her!*—well—like

I jumped out and showed ’em how—

Yes, and jes the place to strike

That-air mouth o’ hern—as sweet

“HOME AG’IN”

As the blossoms breshed her brow
Er sweet-williams round her feet—
White and blushy, too, as she
“Howdied” up to Jonas, and
Jieuked her head, and waved her hand.
“Hey!” says I, as she bounced in
The spring-wagon, reachin’ back
To give *me* a lift, “whoop-ee!”
I-says-ee, “you’re home ag’in—
Home ag’in with me!”

Lord! how *wild* she wuz, and glad,
Gittin’ home!—and things she had
To inquire about, and talk—
Plowin’, plantin’, and the stock—
News o’ neighborhood; and how
Wuz the Deem-girls doin’ now,
Sence that-air young chicken-hawk
They was “tamin’ ” soared away
With their settin’-hen, one day?—
(Said she’d got Mame’s postal-card
’Bout it, very day ’at she

“HOME AG’IN”

Started home from Bethany.)
How wuz produce—eggs, and lard?—
Er wuz stores still claimin’ “hard
Times,” as usual? And, says she,
Troubled-like, “How’s Deedie—say?
Sence pore child e-loped away
And got back, and goin’ to ’ply
Fer school-license by and by—
And where’s ’Lijy workin’ at?
And how’s ‘Aunt’ and ‘Uncle Jake’?
How wuz ‘Old Maje’—and the cat?
And wuz Marthy’s baby fat
As his ‘Humpty-Dumpty’ ma?—
Sweetest thing she ever saw!—
Must run ’crosst and see her, too,
Soon as she turned in and got
Supper fer us—smokin’-hot—
And the ‘dishes’ all wuz through.—”
Sich a supper! W’y, I set
There and et, and et, and et!—
Jes et on, tel Jonas he
Pushed his chair back, laughed, and says,
“I could walk *his* log!” and we
All laughed then, tel ’Viry she

“HOME AG’IN”

Lit the lamp—and I give in!—
Riz and kissed her: “Heaven bless
You!” says I—“you’re home ag’in—
Same old dimple in your chin,
Same white apern,” I-says-ee,
“Same sweet girl, and good to see
As your *mother* ust to be,—
And I’ got you home ag’in—
Home ag’in with me!”

I turns then to go on by her
Through the door—and see her eyes
Both wuz swimmin’, and she tries
To say somepin’—can’t—and so
Grabs and hugs and lets me go.
Noticed Aunty’d made a fire
In the settin’-room and gone
Back where her p’serves wuz on
B’ilin’ in the kitchen. I
Went out on the porch and set,
Thinkin’-like. And by and by
Heerd Elviry, soft and low,

“HOME AG’IN”

At the organ, kind o’ go
A mi-anderin’ up and down
With her fingers ’mongst the keys—
“Vacant Chair” and “Old Camp-Groun’.” . . .
Dusk was moist-like, with a breeze
Lazin’ round the locus’-trees—
Heerd the hosses champin’, and
Jonas feedin’, and the hogs—
Yes, and katydids and frogs—
And a tree-toad, som’er’s. Heerd
Also whipperwills.—*My land!*—
All so mournful ever’where—
Them out here, and her in there,—
’Most like ’tendin’ *services!*
Anyway, I must ’a’ jes
Kind o’ drapped asleep, I guess;
’Cause when Jonas must ’a’ passed
Me, a-comin’ in, I knowed
Nothin’ of it—yit it seemed
Sort o’ like I kind o’ dreamed
’Bout him, too, a-slippin’ in,
And a-watchin’ back to see
Ef I *wuz* asleep, and then
Passin’ in where ’Viry wuz;

“HOME AG’IN”

And where I declare it does
'Pear to me I heerd him say,
Wild and glad and whisperin'—
'Peared-like heerd him say, says-ee,
“Ah! I'got you home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!”

EMERSON

CONCORD, APRIL 27, 1882

WHAT shall we say? In quietude,
 Within his home, in dreams unguessed,
He lies; the grief a nation would
 Evince must be repressed.

Nor meet is it the loud acclaim
 His countrymen would raise—that he
Has left the riches of his fame
 The whole world's legacy.

Then, prayerful, let us pause until
 We find, as grateful spirits can,
The way most worthy to fulfill
 The tribute due the man.

Think what were best in his regard
 Who voyaged life in such a cause:
Our simplest faith were best reward—
 Our silence, best applause.

WHITTIER—AT NEWBURYPORT

SEPTEMBER 7, 1892

HAIL to thee, with all good cheer!

Though men say thou liest here

Dead,

And mourn, all uncomforted.

By thy faith refining mine,

Life still lights those eyes of thine,

Clear

As the Autumn atmosphere.

Ever still thy smile appears

As the rainbow of thy tears

Bent

O'er thy love's vast firmament.

Thou endurest—shalt endure,

Purely, as thy song is pure.

Hear

Thus my hail: Good cheer! good cheer!

THE ONWARD TRAIL

MYRON W. REED, DENVER, JAN. 30, 1899

JUST as of old,—with fearless foot
And placid face and resolute,
He takes the faint, mysterious trail
That leads beyond our earthly hail.

We would cry, as in last farewell,
But that his hand waves, and a spell
Is laid upon our tongues: and thus
He takes unworded leave of us.

And it is fitting:—As he fared
Here with us, so is he prepared
For any fortuning the night
May hold for him beyond our sight.

The moon and stars they still attend
His wandering footsteps to the end,—
He did not question, nor will we,
Their guidance and security.

THE ONWARD TRAIL

So, never parting word nor cry:—
We feel, with him, that by and by
Our onward trails will meet and then
Merge and be ever one again.

LINCOLN

A PEACEFUL LIFE;—just toil and rest—
All his desire;—
To read the books he liked the best
Beside the cabin fire—
God's word and man's;—to peer sometimes
Above the page, in smouldering gleams,
And catch, like far heroic rhymes,
The onmarch of his dreams.

A peaceful life;—to hear the low
Of pastured herds,
Or woodman's ax that, blow on blow,
Fell sweet as rhythmic words.
And yet there stirred within his breast
A fateful pulse that, like a roll
Of drums, made high above his rest
A tumult in his soul.

LINCOLN

A peaceful life! They hailed him even
As One was hailed
Whose open palms were nailed toward Heaven
When prayers nor aught availed.
And, lo, he paid the selfsame price
To lull a nation's awful strife
And will us, through the sacrifice
Of self, his peaceful life.

YOUR HEIGHT IS OURS

TO RICHARD HENRY STODDARD, AT THE STODDARD
BANQUET BY THE AUTHORS' CLUB,
NEW YORK, MARCH 25, 1897

O PRINCELY poet!—kingly heir
Of gifts divinely sent,—
Your own!—nor envy anywhere,
Nor voice of discontent.

Though, of ourselves, all poor are we,
And frail and weak of wing,
Your height is ours—your ecstasy—
Your glory, when you sing.

Most favored of the gods, and great
In gifts beyond our store,
We covet not your rich estate,
But prize our own the more.—

YOUR HEIGHT IS OURS

The gods give as but gods may do—

We count *our* riches thus,—

They gave their richest gifts to you,

And then gave you to us.

HYMN EXULTANT

FOR EASTER

VOICE of Mankind, sing over land and sea—

Sing, in this glorious morn!

The long, long night is gone from Calvary—

The cross, the thong and thorn;

The sealed tomb yields up its saintly guest,

No longer to be burdened and oppressed.

Heart of Mankind, thrill answer to His own,

So human, yet divine!

For earthly love He left His heavenly throne—

For love like thine and mine—

For love of us, as one might kiss a bride,

His lifted lips touched death's, all satisfied.

Soul of Mankind, He wakes—He lives once more!

O soul, with heart and voice

Sing! sing!—the stone rolls chorus from the door—

Our Lord stands forth.—Rejoice!

Rejoice O garden-land of song and flowers;

Our King returns to us, forever ours!

A SONG OF THE ROAD

O I WILL walk with you, my lad, whichever way
you fare,

You'll have me, too, the side o' you, with heart
as light as air;

No care for where the road you take's a-leadin'—
—*anywhere*,—

It can but be a joyful jant the whilst *you* journey
there.

The road you take's the path o' love, an' that's
the bridth o' two—

And I will walk with you, my lad—O I will walk
with you.

Ho! I will walk with you, my lad,

Be weather black or blue

Or roadsides frost or dew, my lad—

O I will walk with you.

A SONG OF THE ROAD

Aye, glad, my lad, I'll walk with you, whatever
winds may blow,
Or summer blossoms stay our steps, or blinding
drifts of snow;
The way that you set face and foot's the way that
I will go,
And brave I'll be, abreast o' you, the Saints and
Angels know!
With loyal hand in loyal hand, and one heart
made o' two,
Through summer's gold, or winter's cold, it's I
will walk with you.

Sure, I will walk with you, my lad,
As love ordains me to,—
To Heaven's door, and through, my lad,
O I will walk with you.

RED RIDING HOOD

SWEET little myth of the nursery story—
Earliest love of mine infantile breast,
Be something tangible, bloom in thy glory
Into existence, as thou art addressed!
Hasten! appear to me, guileless and good—
Thou art so dear to me, Red Riding Hood!

Azure-blue eyes, in a marvel of wonder,
Over the dawn of a blush breaking out;
Sensitive nose, with a little smile under
Trying to hide in a blossoming pout—
Couldn't be serious, try as you would,
Little mysterious Red Riding Hood!

Hah! little girl, it is desolate, lonely,
Out in this gloomy old forest of Life!—
Here are not pansies and buttercups only—
Brambles and briars as keen as a knife;
And a Heart, ravenous, prowls in the wood
For the meal have he must,—Red Riding Hood!

THE MOTHER SAINTED

AND yet she does not stir,—
Such silence weighs on her
 We hear the drip
Of teardrops as we press
Our kisses answerless
 On brow and lip.

Not even the yearning touch
Of lips she loved so much
 She made their breath
One with her own, will she
Give answer to and be
 Wooed back from death.

And though he kneel and plead
Who was her greatest need,
 And on her cheek
Lay the soft baby-face
In its old resting-place,
 She will not speak.

THE CHRIST

“FATHER!” (so The Word) he cried,—
“Son of Thine, and yet denied;
By my brothers dragged and tried,
Scoffed and scourged, and crucified,
With a thief on either side—
Brothers mine, alike belied,—
Arms of mercy open wide,
Father! Father!” So he died.

TO "UNCLE REMUS"

WE LOVE your dear old face and voice—
We're *all* Miss Sally's Little Boys,
 Climbin' your knee,
 In ecstasy,
Rejoicin' in your Creeturs' joys
 And trickery.

The Lord who made the day and night,
He made the Black man and the White;
 So, in like view,
 We hold it true
That He haint got no *favorite*—
 Unless it's you.

TO ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON—

ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON!

Blue the lift and braw the dawn
O' ye'r comin' here amang
Strangers wha hae luved ye lang!
Strangers tae ye we maun be,
Yet tae us ye're kenned a wee
By the writin's ye hae done,
Robert Louis Stevenson.

Syne ye've pit ye'r pen tae sic'
Tales it stabbt us tae the quick—
Whiles o' tropic isles an' seas
An' o' gowden treesuries—
Tales o' deid men's banes; an' tales
Swete as sangs o' nightingales
When the nune o' mirk's begun—
Robert Louis Stevenson.

TO ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Sae we hail thee! nane the less
For the "burr" that ye caress
Wi' ye'r denty tongue o' Scots,
Makin' words forget-me-nots
O' ye'r bonnie braes that were
Sung o' Burns the Poemer—
And that later lavrock, one
Robert Louis Stevenson.

ON A YOUTHFUL PORTRAIT OF STEVENSON

A FACE of youth mature; a mouth of tender,
Sad, human sympathy, yet something stoic
In clasp of lip: wide eyes of calmest splendor,
And brow serenely ample and heroic:—
The features—all—lit with a soul ideal

O visionary boy! what were you seeing,
What hearing, as you stood thus midst the real
Ere yet one master-work of yours had being?

Is it a foolish fancy that we humor—
Investing daringly with life and spirit
This youthful portrait of you ere one rumor
Of your great future spoke that men might hear
it?—

Is it a fancy, or your first of glories,
That you were listening, and the camera drew
you
Hearing the voices of your untold stories
And all your lovely poems calling to you?

THE TRAVELING MAN

I

COULD I pour out the nectar the gods only can,
I would fill up my glass to the brim
And drink the success of the Traveling Man,
And the house represented by him ;
And could I but tincture the glorious draught
With his smiles, as I drank to him then,
And the jokes he has told and the laughs he has
laughed,
I would fill up the goblet again—

And drink to the sweetheart who gave him good-
bye
With a tenderness thrilling him this
Very hour, as he thinks of the tear in her eye
That salted the sweet of her kiss ;
To her truest of hearts and her fairest of hands
I would drink, with all serious prayers,
Since the heart she must trust is a Traveling Man's,
And as warm as the ulster he wears.

THE TRAVELING MAN

II

I would drink to the wife, with the babe on her
knee,

Who awaits his returning in vain—
Who breaks his brave letters so tremulously
And reads them again and again!
And I'd drink to the feeble old mother who sits
At the warm fireside of her son
And murmurs and weeps o'er the stocking she
knits,
As she thinks of the wandering one.

I would drink a long life and a health to the friends
Who have met him with smiles and with cheer—
To the generous hand that the landlord extends
To the wayfarer journeying here:
And I pledge, when he turns from this earthly
abode
And pays the last fare that he can,
Mine Host of the Inn at the End of the Road
Will welcome the Traveling Man!

FROM DELPHI TO CAMDEN

I

FROM Delphi to Camden—little Hoosier towns,—
But here were classic meadows, blooming dales
and downs;

And here were grassy pastures, dewy as the leas
Trampled over by the trains of royal pageantries!

And here the winding highway loitered through
the shade

Of the hazel-covert, where, in ambuscade,
Loomed the larch and linden, and the greenwood-
tree

Under which bold Robin Hood loud hallooed to
me!

Here the stir and riot of the busy day
Dwindled to the quiet of the breath of May;

FROM DELPHI TO CAMDEN

Gurgling brooks, and ridges lily-marged and
spanned
By the rustic bridges found in Wonderland!

II

From Delphi to Camden,—from Camden back
again!—
And now the night was on us, and the lightning
and the rain;
And still the way was wondrous with the flash of
hill and plain,—
The stars like printed asterisks—the moon a murky
stain!

And I thought of tragic idyl, and of flight and hot
pursuit!
And the jingle of the bridle, and cuirass, and spur
on boot,
As our horses' hooves struck showers from the
flinty boulders set
In freshet-ways of writhing reed and drowning
violet.

FROM DELPHI TO CAMDEN

And we passed beleaguered castles, with their
battlements a-frown;

Where a tree fell in the forest was a turret toppled
down;

While my master and commander—the brave
knight I galloped with

On this reckless road to ruin or to fame was—
Dr. Smith!

THE BALLADE OF THE COMING RAIN

WHEN the morning swoons in its highest heat,
And the sunshine dims, and no dark shade
Streaks the dust of the dazzling street,
And the long straw splits in the lemonade;
When the circus lags in a sad parade,
And the drum throbs dull as a pulse of pain,
And the breezeless flags hang limp and frayed—
O then is the time to look for rain.

When the man on the watering cart bumps by,
Trilling the air of an old fife-tune,
With a dull, soiled smile, and one shut eye,
Lost in a dream of the afternoon;
When the awning sags like a lank balloon,
And a thick sweat stands on the window-pane,
And a five-cent fan is a priceless boon—
O then is the time to look for rain.

THE BALLADE OF THE COMING RAIN

When the goldfish tank is a grimy gray,
And the dummy stands at the clothing store
With a cap pulled on in a rakish way,
And ■ rubber-coat with the hind before;
When the man in the barber chair flops o'er
And the chin he wags has a telltale stain,
And the bootblack lurks at the open door—
O then is the time to look for rain.

TO THE JUDGE

A VOICE FROM THE INTERIOR OF OLD HOOP-POLE
TOWNSHIP

FRIEND of my earliest youth,

Can't you arrange to come down
And visit a fellow out here in the woods—

Out of the dust of the town?
Can't you forget you're a Judge
And put by your dolorous frown
And tan your wan face in the smile of a friend—
Can't you arrange to come down?

Can't you forget for a while
The arguments prosy and drear,—
To lean at full-length in indefinite rest
In the lap of the greenery here?

TO THE JUDGE

Can't you kick over "the Bench,"
And "husk" yourself out of your gown
To dangle your legs where the fishing is good—
Can't you arrange to come down?

Bah! for your office of State!
And bah! for its technical lore!
What does our President, high in his chair,
But wish himself low as before!
Pick between peasant and king,—
Poke your bald head through a crown
Or shadow it here with the laurels of Spring!—
Can't you arrange to come down?

"Judge it" out *here*, if you will,—
The birds are in session by dawn;
You can draw, not *complaints*, but a sketch of the
hill
And a breath that your betters have drawn;
You can open your heart, like a case,
To a jury of kine, white and brown,
And their verdict of "Moo" will just satisfy you!—
Can't you arrange to come down?

TO THE JUDGE

Can't you arrange it, old Pard?—

Pigeonhole Blackstone and Kent!—

Here we have "Breitmann," and Ward,

Twain, Burdette, Nye, and content!

Can't you forget you're a Judge

And put by your dolorous frown

And tan your wan face in the smile of a friend—

Can't you arrange to come down?

A FEEL IN THE CHRIS'MAS-AIR

THEY'S ■ kind o' *feel* in the air, to me,
When the Chris'mas-times sets in,
That's about as much of a mystery
As ever I've run ag'in!—
Fer instunce, now, whilse I gain in weight
And gineral health, I swear
They's a *goneness* somers I can't quite state—
A kind o' *feel* in the air.

They's a feel in the Chris'mas-air goes right
To the spot where a man *lives* at!—
It gives a feller a' appetite—
They ain't no doubt about *that*!—
And yit they's *somepin'*—I don't know what—
That follers me, here and there,
And ha'nts and worries and spares me not—
A kind o' feel in the air!

A FEEL IN THE CHRIS'MAS-AIR

They's a *feel*, as I say, in the air that's jest
As blame-don sad as sweet!—
In the same ra-sho as I feel the best
And am spryest on my feet,
They's allus a kind o' sort of a' *ache*
That I can't lo-cate no-where;—
But it comes with *Chris'mas*, and no mistake!—
A kind o' feel in the air.

Is it the racket the childern raise?—
W'y, *no!*—God bless 'em!—*no!* —
Is it the eyes and the cheeks ablaze—
Like my *own* wuz, long ago?—
Is it the bleat o' the whistle and beat
O' the little toy-drum and blare
O' the horn?—*No! no!*—it is jest the sweet—
The sad-sweet feel in the air.

ON A FLY-LEAF

IN JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY'S POEMS

SINGERS there are of courtly themes—

Drapers in verse—who would dress their rhymes
In robes of ermine; and singers of dreams
Of gods high-throned in the classic times;
Singers of nymphs, in their dim retreats,
Satyrs, with scepter and diadem;
But the singer who sings as a man's heart beats
Well may blush for the rest of them.

I like the thrill of such poems as these,—

All spirit and fervor of splendid fact—
Pulse, and muscle, and arteries
Of living, heroic thought and act!—
Where every line is a vein of red
And rapturous blood all unconfined
As it leaps from a heart that has joyed and bled
With the rights and the wrongs of all mankind.

THE SERMON OF THE ROSE

WILLFUL we are, in our infirmity
Of childish questioning and discontent.
Whate'er befalls us is divinely meant—
Thou Truth the clearer for thy mystery!
Make us to meet what is or is to be
With fervid welcome, knowing it is sent
To serve us in some way full excellent,
Though we discern it all belatedly.
The rose buds, and the rose blooms, and the rose
Bows in the dews, and in its fulness, lo,
Is in the lover's hand,—then on the breast
Of her he loves, —and there dies. — And who
 knows
What fate of all a rose may undergo
Is fairest, dearest, sweetest, loveliest?

Nay, we are children: we will not mature.
A blessed gift must seem a theft; and tears
Must storm our eyes when but a joy appears
In drear disguise of sorrow; and how poor
We seem when we are richest,—most secure

THE SERMON OF THE ROSE

Against all poverty the lifelong years
We yet must waste in childish doubts and fears
That, in despite of reason, still endure!
Alas! the sermon of the rose we will
Not wisely ponder; nor the sobs of grief
Lulled into sighs of rapture, nor the cry
Of fierce defiance that again is still.
Be patient—patient with our frail belief,
And stay it yet a little ere we die.

O opulent life of ours, though dispossessed
Of treasure after treasure! Youth most fair
Went first, but left its priceless coil of hair—
Moaned over, sleepless nights, kissed and caressed
Through drip and blur of tears the tenderest.
And next went Love—the ripe rose glowing there,
Her very sister! . . . *It* is here, but where
Is *she*, of all the world the first and best?
And yet how sweet the sweet earth after rain—
How sweet the sunlight on the garden-wall
Across the roses—and how sweetly flows
The limpid yodel of the brook again!
And yet—and yet how sweeter, after all,
The smoldering sweetness of a dead red rose.

OSCAR C. McCULLOCH

INDIANAPOLIS, DEC. 12, 1891

WHAT would best please our friend, in token of
The sense of our great loss?—Our sighs and
tears?

Nay, these he fought against through all his
years,

Heroically voicing, high above

Grief's ceaseless minor, moaning like a dove,

The pæan triumphant that the soldier hears,

Scaling the walls of death, midst shouts and
cheers,

The old flag laughing in his eyes' last love.

Nay, then, to pleasure him were it not meet

To yield him bravely, as his fate arrives?—

Drape him in radiant roses, head and feet,

And be partakers, while his work survives,

Of his fair fame,—paying the tribute sweet

To all humanity—our nobler lives.

THE LOVING CUP

TRANCED in the glamor of a dream
Where banquet-lights and fancies gleam
And ripest wit and wine abound,
And pledges hale go round and round,—
Lo, dazzled with enchanted rays—
As in the golden olden days
Sir Galahad—my eyes swim up
To greet your splendor, Loving Cup!

What is the secret of your art,
Linking together hand and heart
Your myriad votaries who do
Themselves most honor honoring you?
What gracious service have you done
To win the name that you have won?—
Kissing it back from tuneful lips
That sing your praise between the sips!

Your spicy breath, O Loving Cup,
That, like an incense steaming up,

THE LOVING CUP

Full-freighted with a fragrance fine
As ever swooned on sense of mine,
Is rare enough.—But then, ah me!
How rarer every memory
That, rising with it, wreathes and blends
In forms and faces of my friends!

O Loving Cup! in fancy still,
I clasp their hands, and feel the thrill
Of fellowship that still endures
While lips are theirs and wine is yours!
And while my memory journeys down
The years that lead to Boston Town,
Abide where first were rendered up
Our mutual loves, O Loving Cup!

SAY SOMETHING TO ME

SAY something to me! I've waited so long—
Waited and wondered in vain;
Only a sentence would fall like a song
Over this listening pain—
Over a silence that glowers and frowns,—
Even my pencil to-night
Slips in the dews of my sorrow and wounds
Each tender word that I write.

Say something to me—if only to tell
Me you remember the past;
Let the sweet words, like the notes of a bell,
Ring out my vigil at last.
O it were better, far better than this
Doubt and distrust in the breast,—
For in the wine of a fanciful kiss
I could taste Heaven, and—rest.

SAY SOMETHING TO ME

Say something to me! I kneel and I plead,
In my wild need, for a word;
If my poor heart from this silence were freed,
I could soar up like a bird
In the glad morning, and twitter and sing,
Carol and warble and cry
Blithe as the lark as he cruises awing
Over the deeps of the sky.

A WHOLLY UNSCHOLASTIC OPINION

PLAIN hoss-sense in poetry-writin'
Would jes knock sentiment a-kitin' !
Mostly poets is all star-gazin'
And moanin' and groanin' and paraphrasin' !

A SHORT'NIN' BREAD SONG—PIECED OUT

BEHINE de hen-house, on my knees,
Thought I hearn a chickin sneeze—
Sneezed so hard wi' de whoopin'-cough
I thought he'd sneeze his blame head off.

CHORUS

Fotch dat dough f'um de kitchen-shed—
Rake dem coals out hot an' red—
Putt on de oven an' putt on de led,—
Mammy's gwineter cook some short'nin'-
bread.

O I' got a house in Baltimo'—
Street-kyars run right by my do'—
Street-kyars run right by my gate,
Hit's git up soon and set up late.

CHORUS

A SHORT'NIN' BREAD SONG—PIECED OUT

De raincrow hide in some ole tree
An' holler out, all hoarse, at me—
Sayes, "When I sing, de rain hit po'
So's you ain't 'bleedged to plow no mo'!"

CHORUS

Ole man Toad, on High-low Hill,
He steal my dram an' drink his fill,—
Heels in the path, an' toes in the grass—
Hit ain't de fus' time an' shain't be de las'!

CHORUS

When corn-plantin' done come roun',
Blackbird own de whole plowed-groun',—
Corn in de grain, as I've hearn said,
Dat's de blackbird's short'nin' bread.

CHORUS

De sweetes' chune what evah I heard
Is de sairanade o' de mockin'-bird;
Whilse de mou'nfullest an' de least I love
Is de Sund'y-song o' de ole woods-dove.

CHORUS

A SHORT'NIN' BREAD SONG—PIECED OUT

I nevah ain't know, outside o' school,
A smartah mare dan my ole mule,—
I holler "Wo," an' she go "gee,"
Des lak' de good Lord chast'nin' me.

CHORUS

Hit's no houn'-pup I taken to raise
Hain't nevah jes'ly airn' my praise:
De mo' cawn-pone I feed dat pup,
De mo' he des won't fatten up.

CHORUS

I hangs a hoss-shoe ovah my head,
An' I keeps a' ole sieve under de bed,
So, quinchiquently, I sleep soun',
Wid no ole witches pester'n' roun'.

CHORUS

I jine de chu'ch las' Chuesday night,
But when Sis Jane ain't treat me right
I 'low her chu'ch ain' none o' mine,
So I 'nounce to all I done on-jine.

CHORUS

CASSANDER

“CASSANDER! O, Cassander!”—her mother’s
voice seems cle’r

As ever, from the old back-porch, a-hollerin’ fer
her—

Especially in airly Spring—like May, two year’
ago—

Last time she hollered fer her,—and Cassander
didn’t hear!

Cassander wuz so chirpy-like and sociable and free,
And good to ever’body, and wuz even good to me

Though *I* wuz jes a common—well, a farm-
hand, don’t you know,

A-workin’ on her father’s place, as pore as pore
could be!

Her bein’ jes a’ only child, Cassander had her way
A good-eal more’n other girls; and neighbors ust
to say

CASSANDER

She looked most like her Mother, but wuz turned
most like her Pap,—
Except *he* had no use fer *town*-folks then—ner *yit*
to-day!

I can't claim she encouraged *me*: She'd let me
drive her in
To town sometimes, on Saturd'ys, and fetch her
home ag'in,
Tel onc't she 'scused "Old Moll" and me,—
and some blame city-chap,
He driv her home, two-forty style, in face o' kith
and kin.

She even tried to make him stay fer supper, but
I 'low
He must 'a'-kindo' 'spicioned some objections.—
Anyhow,
Her mother callin' at her, whilse her father
stood and shook
His fist,—the town-chap turnt his team and made
his partin' bow.

CASSANDER

“Cassander! *You*, Cassander!” — hear her
mother jes as plain,
And see Cassander blushin’ like the peach-tree
down the lane,
Whilse I sneaked on apast her, with a sort o’
hangdog look,
A-feelin’ cheap as sorghum and as green as sugar-
cane!

(You see, I’d *skooted* when she met her *town-*
beau—when, in fact,
Ef I’d had sense I’d *stayed* fer her.—But sense
wuz what I lacked!
So I’d cut home ahead o’ her, so’s I could tell
’em what
Wuz keepin’ her. And—*you* know how a jealous
fool ’ll act!)

I past her, I wuz sayin,’—but she never turnt her
head;
I swallered-like and cle’red my th’oat—but that
wuz all I said;

CASSANDER

And whilse I hoped fer some word back, it
wuzn't what I got.—
That girl 'll not stay stiller on the day she's layin'
dead!

Well, that-air silence *lasted!*—Ust to listen ever'-
day
I'd be at work and hear her mother callin' thata-
way;
I'd *sight* Cassander, mayby, cuttin' home acrost
the blue
And drizzly fields; but nary answer—nary word
to say!

Putt in about two weeks o' that—two weeks o'
rain and mud,
Er mostly so: I couldn't plow. The old crick
like a flood:
And, lonesome as a borried dog, I'd wade them
old woods through—
The dogwood blossoms white as snow, and red-
buds red as blood.

CASSANDER

Last time her mother called her—sich a morning
like as now:

The robins and the bluebirds, and the blossoms on
the bough—

And this wuz yit 'fore brekfust, with the sun
out at his best,

And hosses kickin' in the barn—and dry enough
to plow.

“Cassander! O, Cassander!” . . . And her only
answer—What?—

A letter, twisted round the cookstove-damper,
smokin'-hot,

A-statin': “I wuz married on that day of all
the rest,

The day my husband fetched me home—ef you
ain't all fergot!”

“Cassander! O, Cassander!” seems, allus, 'long
in May,

I hear her mother callin' her—a-callin', night and
day—

CASSANDER

“Cassander! *O*, Cassander!” allus callin’, as I
say,
“Cassander! *O*, Cassander!” jes a-callin’ that-
away.

EUGENE FIELD

WITH gentlest tears, no less than jubilee
Of blithest joy, we heard him, and still hear
Him singing on, with full voice, pure and clear,
Uplifted, as some classic melody
In sweetest legends of old minstrelsy;
Or, swarming Elfin-like upon the ear,
His airy notes make all the atmosphere
One blur of bird and bee and lullaby.
His tribute:—Luster in the faded bloom
Of cheeks of old, old mothers; and the fall
Of gracious dew in eyes long dry and dim;
And hope in lovers' pathways midst perfume
Of woodland haunts; and—meed exceeding
all,—
The love of little children laurels him.

A BALLAD—

WITH A SERIOUS CONCLUSION

CROWD about me, little children—
Come and cluster 'round my knee
While I tell a little story
That happened once with me.

My father he had gone away
A-sailing on the foam,
Leaving me—the merest infant—
And my mother dear at home;

For my father was a sailor,
And he sailed the ocean o'er
For full five years ere yet again
He reached his native shore.

And I had grown up rugged
And healthy day by day,
Though I was but a puny babe
When father went away.

Â BALLAD

Poor mother she would kiss me
And look at me and sigh
So strangely, oft I wondered
And would ask the reason why.

And she would answer sadly,
Between her sobs and tears,—
“You look so like your father,
Far away so many years!”

And then she would caress me
And brush my hair away,
And tell me not to question,
But to run about my play.

Thus I went playing thoughtfully—
For that my mother said,—
“You look so like your father!”
Kept ringing in my head,—

So, ranging once the golden sands
That looked out on the sea,
I called aloud, “My father dear,
Come back to ma and me!”

A BALLAD

Then I saw a glancing shadow
On the sand, and heard the shriek
Of a seagull flying seaward,
And I heard a gruff voice speak:—

“Aye, aye, my little shipmate,
I thought I heard you hail;
Were you trumpeting that seagull,
Or do you see a sail?”

And as rough and gruff a sailor
As ever sailed the sea
Was standing near grotesquely
And leering dreadfully.

I replied, though I was frightened,—
“It was my father dear
I was calling for across the sea—
I think he didn’t hear.”

And then the sailor leered again
In such a frightful way,
And made so many faces
I was little loath to stay.

A BALLAD

But he started fiercely toward me—
Then made a sudden halt
And roared, "*I think he heard you!*"
And turned a somersault.

Then a wild fear overcame me,
And I flew off like the wind,
Shrieking "*Mother!*"—and the sailor
Just a little way behind!

And then my mother heard me,
And I saw her shade her eyes,
Looking toward me from the doorway,
Transfixed with pale surprise

For a moment—then her features
Glowed with all their wonted charms
As the sailor overtook me,
And I fainted in her arms.

When I awoke to reason
I shuddered with affright
Till I felt my mother's presence
With a thrill of wild delight—

A BALLAD

Till, amid a shower of kisses
Falling glad as summer rain,
A muffled thunder rumbled,—
“Is he coming 'round again?”

Then I shrieked and clung unto her,
While her features flushed and burned
As she told me it was father
From a foreign land returned.

I said—when I was calm again,
And thoughtfully once more
Had dwelt upon my mother's words
Of just the day before,—

“I *don't* look like my father,
As you told me yesterday—
I know I don't—or father
Would have run the other way.”

THE GREEN GRASS OF OLD IRELAND

THE green grass av owld Ireland!

Whilst I be far away,

All fresh an' clean an' jewel-green

It's growin' there to-day.

Oh, it's cleaner, greener growin'—

All the grassy worrld around,

It's greener yet nor any grass

That grows on top o' ground!

The green grass av owld Ireland,

Indade, an' balm 't 'u'd be

To eyes like mine that drip wid brine

As salty as the sea!

For still the more I'm stoppin' here,

The more I'm sore to see

The glory av the green grass av owld Ireland

Ten years ye've paid my airnin's—

I've the l'avin's on the shelf,

Though I be here widout a queen

An' own meself meself:

THE GREEN GRASS OF OLD IRELAND

I'm comin' over steerage,
But I'm goin' back firrst-class,
Patrolin' av the foremost deck
For firrst sight av the grass.

God bless yez, free Ameriky!
I love yez, dock and shore!
I kem to yez in poverty
That's worstin' me no more.
But most I'm lovin' Erin yet,
Wid all her graves, d'ye see,
By reason av the green grass av owld Ireland.

AT HIS WINTRY TENT

SAMUEL RICHARDS—ARTIST—DENVER, COLORADO

Not only master of his art was he,
But master of his spirit—winged indeed
For lordliest height, yet poised for lowliest need
Of those, alas! upheld less buoyantly.
He gloried even in adversity,
And won his country's plaudits, and the meed
Of Old World praise, as one loath to succeed
While others were denied like victory.
Though passed, I count him still my master-friend,
Invincible as through his mortal fight,—
The laughing light of faith still in his eye
As, at his wintry tent, pitched at the end
Of life, he gaily called to me "Good-night,
Old friend, good-night—for there is no good-bye."

OUR QUEER OLD WORLD

*Fer them 'at's here in airliest infant stages,
It's a hard world:*

*Fer them 'at gits the knocks of boyhood's ages,
It's a mean world:*

*For them 'at nothin's good enough they're gittin',
It's a bad world:*

*Fer them 'at learns at last what's right and fittin',
It's a good world.*

THE HIRED MAN.

It's a purty hard world you find, my child—

It's a purty hard world you find!

You fight, little rascal! and kick and squall,
And snort out medicine, spoon and all!

When you're here longer you'll change yer mind
And simmer down sorto' half-rickonciled.

But *now*—Jee!-

My!-mun-nee!

It's a purty hard world, my child!

OUR QUEER OLD WORLD

It's a purty mean world you're in, my lad—

It's a purty mean world you're in!

We know, of course, in your schoolboy-days

It's a world of too many troublesome ways

Of tryin' things over and startin' ag'in,—

Yit *your* chance beats what your *parents* had.

But *now*—O!

Fire-and-tow!

It's a purty mean world, my lad!

It's a purty bad world you've struck, young chap—

It's a purty bad world you've struck—

But *study* the cards that you hold, you know,

And your hopes will sprout and your mustache
grow,

And your store-clothes likely will change your
luck,

And you'll rake a rich ladybird into yer lap!

But *now*—Doubt

All things out.—

It's a purty mean world, young chap!

OUR QUEER OLD WORLD

It's a purty good world this is, old man—

It's a purty good world this is!

For all its follies and shows and lies—

It's rainy weather, and cheeks likewise,

And age, hard-hearin' and rheumatiz.—

We're not a-faultin' the Lord's own plan—

All things jest

At their best.—

It's a purty good world, old man!

THE UNHEARD

I

ONE in the musical throng
 Stood forth with his violin;
And warm was his welcome, and long
 The later applause and the din.—
He had uttered, with masterful skill,
 A melody hailed of men;
And his own blood leapt a-thrill,
 As they thundered again.

II

Another stood forth.—And a rose
 Bloomed in her hair—likewise
One at her tremulous throat—
 And a *rapture* bloomed in her eyes.
Tempests of cheers upon cheers,
 Praises to last a life long;
Roses in showers of tears—
 All for her song.

THE UNHEARD

III

One sat apart and alone,
Her lips clasped close and straight,
Uttering never a tone
That the World might hear, elate—
Uttering never a low
Murmurous verse nor a part
Of the veriest song—But O
The song in her heart!

THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

I'VE allus held—till jest of late—
That *Poetry* and me
Got on best, not to 'sociate—
That is, *most* poetry;
But t'other day my *son-in-law*,
Milt—ben in town to mill—
Fetched home a present-like, fer Ma,—
The Rhymes of Ironquill.

Milt ust to teach; and, 'course, *his* views
Ranks over *common* sense;—
That's *biased* me, till I refuse
'Most all he rickommends.—
But Ma *she* read and read along
And cried, like women will,
About that "Washerwoman's Song"
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

And then she made *me* read the thing,
And found my specs and all:
And I jest leant back there—i jing—
My cheer ag'inst the wall—
And read and *read*, and read and *read*,
All to myse'f—until
I lit the lamp and went to bed
With Rhymes of Ironquill!

I propped myse'f up there, and—*durn*!—
I never shet an eye
Till daylight!—hogged the whole concern
Tee-total, mighty nigh!—
I'd sigh sometimes, and cry sometimes,
Er laugh jest fit to kill—
Clean *captured*-like with them-air rhymes
O' that-air Ironquill!

Read that-un 'bout old "Marmaton"
'At hain't ben ever "sized"
In Song before—and yit's rolled on
Jest same as 'postrophized!—

THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

Putt me in mind o' *our* old crick
At *Freeport*—and the *mill*—
And Hinchman's Ford—till jest *homesick*—
Them Rhymes of Ironquill!

Read that-un, too, 'bout "Game o' Whist,"
And likenin' Life to fun
Like *that*—and playin' out yer fist,
However cards is run:
And them "Tobacker-Stemmers' Song"
They sung with sich a will
Down 'mongst the misery and wrong—
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

And old John Brown, who broke the sod
Of Freedom's fallor field
And sowed his *heart* there, thankin' God
Pore slaves would git the yield—
Rained his last tears fer them and *us*
To irrigate and till
A crop of Song as glorious
As Rhymes of Ironquill.

THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

And—sergeant, died there in the War,
 'At talked, out of his head . . .
He went "back to the Violet Star,"
 I'll bet—jest like he said!—
Yer Wars kin riddle bone and flesh,
 And blow out brains, and spill
Life-blood,—but *Somepin'* lives on, fresh
 As Rhymes of Ironquill.

EQUITY—?

THE meanest man I ever saw
Allus kep' inside o' the law;
And ten-times better fellers I've knowed
The blame gran'-jury's sent over the road.

THE SMITTEN PURIST

AND THE CHARMING MISS SMITH'S EFFECT UPON HIM

THWEET Poethy! let me *lithp* forethwith,
That I may thhing of the name of Smith—

Which name, alath!

In Harmony hath

No adequate rhyme, letht you grant me thith,—
That the thimple thibillant thound of *eth*—

(Which to thave my thoul, I can not expreth!)

Thuth I may thhingingly,

Wooring and winningly

Thu—thu—thound in the name of Smith.

O give me a name that will rhyme with Smith,—
For wild and weird ath the sthrange name ith,

I would sthrangle a sthrain

And a thad refrain

THE SMITTEN PURIST

Faint and sthweet ath a whithpered kissth;
I would thhing thome thong for the mythtic mith
Who beareth the thingular name of Smith—

 The sthrangely curiouth,
 Rich and luxuriouth
Ap—pup—pellation of Smith!

O had I a name that would rhyme with Smith—
Thome rythmical tincture of rethonant blith—

 Thome melody rare
 Ath the cherubth blare
On them little trumpeths they're foolin' with—
I would thit me down, and I'd thhing like thith
Of the girl of the thingular name of Smith—

 The sthrangely curiouth,
 Rich and luxuriouth
Pup—patronymic of Smith!

IN THE EVENING

I

IN the evening of our days,
When the first far stars above
Glimmer dimmer, through the haze,
Than the dewy eyes of love,
Shall we mournfully revert
To the vanished morns and Mays
Of our youth, with hearts that hurt,—
In the evening of our days?

II

Shall the hand that holds your own
Till the twain are thrilled as now,—
Be withheld, or colder grown?
Shall my kiss upon your brow
Falter from its high estate?
And, in all forgetful ways,
Shall we sit apart and wait—
In the evening of our days?

IN THE EVENING

III

Nay, my wife —my life!—the gloom
 Shall enfold us velvetwise,
And my smile shall be the groom
 Of the gladness of your eyes:
Gently, gently as the dew
 Mingles with the darkening maze,
I shall fall asleep with you—
 In the evening of our days.

MOONSHINER'S SERENADE

THE night's blind-black, an' I 'low the stars's
All skeered at that-air dog's bow-wows!
I sensed the woods-road, clumb the bars,
An' arrove here, tromplin' over cows.
The mist hangs thick enough to cut,
But there's her light a-glimmerin' through
The mornin'-glories, twisted shut—
An' shorely there's her shadder too!

*Ho! hit's good-night,
My Beauty-Bright!
The moon cain't match your can'le-light—
Your can'le-light with you cain't shine,
Lau-ree! Ladylove! tiptoe-fine!*

Oomh! how them roses soaks the air!—
Thess drenched with mist an' renched with
dew!
They's a smell o' plums,too,'round somewhere—
An' I kin smell ripe apples, too.

MOONSHINER'S SERENADE

Mix all them sweet things into one,—
Yer roses, fruit, an' flower an' vine,
Yit I'll say, "No, I don't choose none,
Ef I **kin** git that girl of mine!"

Ho! hit's good-night,
My Beauty-Bright!
Primp a while, an' blow out the light—
Putt me in your prayers, an' then
I'll be twic't as good-again!

THE SILENT SINGER

MRS. D. M. JORDAN, APRIL 29, 1895

ALL sudden she hath ceased to sing,
Hushed in eternal slumbering,
And we make moan that she is dead.—
Nay; peace! be comforted.

Between her singing and her tears
She pauses, listening—and she hears
The Song we can not hear.—And thus
She mutely pities us.

Could she speak out, we doubt not she
Would turn to us full tenderly,
And in the old melodious voice
Say: “Weep not, but rejoice.”

Aye, musical as waters run
In woodland rills through shade and sun,
The sweet voice would flow on and say,—
“Be glad with me to-day.—

THE SILENT SINGER

“Your Earth was very dear and fair
To me—the groves and grasses there;
The bursting buds and blossoms—O
I always loved them so!—

“The very dews within them seemed
Reflected by mine eyes and gleamed
Adown my cheeks in what you knew
As ‘tears,’ and not as dew.

“Your birds, too, in the orchard boughs—
I could not hear them from the house
But I must leave my work and stray
Out in the open day

“And the illimitable range
Of their vast freedom—always strange
And new to me—It pierced my heart
With sweetness as a dart!—

“The singing! singing! singing!—All
The trees bloomed blossoms musical
That chirped and trilled and warbled till
My whole soul seemed to fill

THE SILENT SINGER

“To overflow with music, so
That I have found me kneeling low
In the lush grass, with murmurous words
Thanking God and—the birds.

“So with the ones to me most dear—
I loved them, as I love them Here:
Bear with my memory, therefore,
As when in days of yore,

“O friends of mine, ye praised the note
Of some song, quavering from my throat
Out of the overstress of love
And all the pain thereof.

“And ye, too, do I love with this
Same love—and Heaven knows all it is,—
The birds’ song in it—bud and bloom—
The turf, but not the tomb.”

Between her singing and her tears
She pauses, listening—and she hears
The Song we can not hear.—And thus
She mutely pities us.

A PEACE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

LOUISVILLE, KY., SEPT. 12, 1895: 29TH ENCAMP-
MENT—G. A. R.

THERE'S a Voice across the Nation like a mighty
ocean-hail,
Borne up from out the Southland as the seas be-
fore the gale;
Its breath is in the streaming flag and in the flying
sail—

As we go sailing on.

'Tis a Voice that we remember—ere its summons
soothed as now—
When it rang in battle-challenge, and we answered
vow with vow,—
With roar of gun and hiss of sword and crash of
prow and prow,

As we went sailing on.

A PEACE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

Our hope sank, even as we saw the sun sink faint
and far,—

The Ship of State went groping through the blind-
ing smoke of War—

Through blackest midnight lurching, all uncheered
of moon or star,

Yet sailing—sailing on.

As One who spake the dead awake, with life-blood
leaping warm—

Who walked the troubled waters, all unscathed, in
mortal form,—

We felt our Pilot's presence with His hand upon
the storm,

As we went sailing on.

O Voice of passion lulled to peace, this dawning
of To-day—

O Voices twain now blent as one, ye sing all fears
away,

Since foe and foe are friends, and lo! the Lord, as
glad as they.—

He sends us sailing on.

ONE WITH A SONG

FRANK L. STANTON

HE sings: and his song is heard,
Pure as a joyous prayer,
Because he sings of the simple things—
The fields, and the open air,
The orchard-bough, and the mockingbird,
And the blossoms everywhere.

He sings of a wealth we hold
In common ownership—
The wildwood nook, and the laugh of the
brook,
And the dewdrop's drip and drip,
The love of the lily's heart of gold,
And the kiss of the rose's lip.

The universal heart
Leans listening to his lay
That glints and gleams with the glimmering
dreams

ONE WITH A SONG

Of children at their play—
A lay as rich with unconscious art
As the first song-bird's of May.

Ours every rapturous tone
Of every song of glee,
Because his voice makes native choice
Of Nature's harmony—
So that his singing seems our own,
And ours his ecstasy.

Steadfastly, bravely glad
Above all earthly stress,
He lifts his line to heights divine,
And, singing, ever says,—
This is a better world than bad—
God's love is limitless.

He sings: and his song is heard,
Pure as a joyous prayer,
Because he sings of the simple things—
The fields, and the open air,
The orchard-bough, and the mockingbird,
And the blossoms everywhere.

MR. FOLEY'S CHRISTMAS

*"There's nothing sweet in the city
But the patient lives of the poor."*

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY

I

SINCE pick av them I'm sore denied
Twixt play or work, I say,
Though it be Christmas, I decide
I'll work whilst others play:
I'll whustle, too, wid Christmas pride
To airn me extry pay.—
It's like the job's more glorified
That's done a-holiday!

Dan, dip a coal in dad's pipe-bowl;
Kate, pass me dinner-can:
Och! Mary woman, save yer sowl,
Ye've kissed a workin'-man—
Ye have, this Christmas mornin',
Ye've kissed a workin'-man!

MR. FOLEY'S CHRISTMAS

II

Whisht, Kate an' Dan!—ten thousan' grates
There's yon where ne'er a charm
Av childer-faces sanctuates
The city-homes from harm:
It's cold out there the weather waits
An' bitter whirls the storm,
But, faith! these arms av little Kate's
'Ll kape her fayther warm!

Ay, Danny, tight me belt a mite,—
Kate, aisy wid the can!—
Sure, I'd be comin' home to-night
A hungry workin'-man—
D'yè moind, this Christmas avenin'—
A howlin'-hungry man!

III

It's sorry for the boss I be,
Wid new contracts to sign
An' hire a sub to oversee
Whilst he lave off an' dine;

MR. FOLEY'S CHRISTMAS

It's sorry for the Company
That owns the Aarie Line—
What vasht raasponsibility
They have, compared wid mine!

There, Katy! git me t'other mitt,
An' fetch me yon from Dan—
(Wid each one's "Christmas" hid in it!)
Lave go me dinner-can!—
Ye'll have me docked this mornin'—
This blessed Christmas mornin',—
A dishgraced workin'-man!

AT SEA

O WE go down to sea in ships—
But Hope remains behind,
And Love, with laughter on his lips,
And Peace, of passive mind;
While out across the deeps of night,
With lifted sails of prayer,
We voyage off in quest of light,
Nor find it anywhere.

O Thou who wroughtest earth and sea,
Yet keepest from our eyes
The shores of an eternity
In calms of Paradise,
Blow back upon our foolish quest
With all the driving rain
Of blinding tears and wild unrest,
And waft us home again.

WHAT THE WIND SAID

THE EDGE OF THE WIND

*Ye stars in ye skies seem twinkling
In icicles of light,
And ye edge of ye wind cuts keener
Than ever ye sword-edge might;
Ye footsteps crunch in ye courtway,
And ye trough and ye cask go "ping!"—
Ye china cracks in ye pantry,
And ye crickets cease to sing.*

WHAT THE WIND SAID

*I muse to-day, in a listless way,
In the gleam of a summer land;
I close my eyes as a lover may
At the touch of his sweetheart's hand,
And I hear these things in the whisperings
Of the zephyrs 'round me fanned:—*

I am the Wind, and I rule mankind,
And I hold a sovereign reign
Over the lands, as God designed,
And the waters they contain:
Lo! the bound of the wide world round
Falleth in my domain!

I was born on a stormy morn
In a kingdom walled with snow,
Whose crystal cities laugh to scorn

WHAT THE WIND SAID

The proudest the world can show;
And the daylight's glare is frozen there
In the breath of the blasts that blow.

Life to me was a jubilee
From the first of my youthful days:
Clinking my icy toys with glee—
Playing my childish plays;
Filling my hands with the silver sands
To scatter a thousand ways:

Chasing the flakes that the Polar shakes
From his shaggy coat of white,
Or hunting the trace of the track he makes
And sweeping it from sight,
As he turned to glare from the slippery stair
Of the iceberg's farthest height.

Till I grew so strong that I strayed ere long
From my home of ice and chill;
With an eager heart and a merry song
I traveled the snows until
I heard the thaws in the ice-crag's jaws
Crunched with a hungry will;

WHAT THE WIND SAID

And the angry crash of the waves that dash
 Themselves on the jagged shore
Where the splintered masts of the ice-wrecks flash,
 And the frightened breakers roar
In wild unrest on the ocean's breast
 For a thousand leagues or more.

And the grand old sea invited me
 With a million beckoning hands,
And I spread my wings for a flight as free
 As ever a sailor plans
When his thoughts are wild and his heart beguiled
 With the dreams of foreign lands.

I passed a ship on its homeward trip,
 With a weary and toil-worn crew;
And I kissed their flag with a welcome lip,
 And so glad a gale I blew
That the sailors quaffed their grog and laughed
 At the work I made them do.

I drifted by where sea-groves lie
 Like brides in the fond caress
Of the warm sunshine and the tender sky—

WHAT THE WIND SAID

Where the ocean, passionless
And tranquil, lies like a child whose eyes
Are blurred with drowsiness.

I drank the air and the perfume there,
And bathed in a fountain's spray;
And I smoothed the wings and the plumage rare
Of a bird for his roundelay,
And fluttered a rag from a signal-crag
For a wretched castaway.

With a seagull resting on my breast,
I launched on a madder flight:
And I lashed the waves to a wild unrest,
And howled with a fierce delight
Till the daylight slept; and I wailed and wept
Like a fretful babe all night.

For I heard the boom of a gun strike doom;
And the gleam of a blood-red star
Glared at me through the mirk and gloom
From the lighthouse tower afar;
And I held my breath at the shriek of death
That came from the harbor bar.

WHAT THE WIND SAID

For I am the Wind, and I rule mankind,
And I hold a sovereign reign
Over the lands, as God designed,
And the waters they contain:
Lo! the bound of the wide world round
Falleth in my domain!

I journeyed on, when the night was gone,
O'er a coast of oak and pine;
And I followed a path that a stream had drawn
Through a land of vale and vine,
And here and there was a village fair
In a nest of shade and shine.

I passed o'er lakes where the sunshine shakes
And shivers his golden lance
On the glittering shield of the wave that breaks
Where the fish-boats dip and dance,
And the trader sails where the mist unveils
The glory of old romance.

I joyed to stand where the jeweled hand
Of the maiden-morning lies
On the tawny brow of the mountain-land,

WHAT THE WIND SAID

Where the eagle shrieks and cries,
And holds his throne to himself alone
From the light of human eyes.

Adown deep glades where the forest shades
Are dim as the dusk of day—
Where only the foot of the wild beast wades,
Or the Indian dares to stray,
As the blacksnakes glide through the reeds and hide
In the swamp-depths grim and gray.

And I turned and fled from the place of dread
To the far-off haunts of men,
“In the city’s heart is rest,” I said,—
But I found it not, and when
I saw but care and vice reign there
I was filled with wrath again:

And I blew a spark in the midnight dark
Till it flashed to an angry flame
And scarred the sky with a lurid mark

WHAT THE WIND SAID

As red as the blush of shame :
And a hint of hell was the dying yell
That up from the ruins came.

The bells went wild, and the black smoke piled
Its pillars against the night,
Till I gathered them, like flocks defiled,
And scattered them left and right,
While the holocaust's red tresses tossed
As ■ maddened Fury's might.

"Ye overthrown!" did I jeer and groan—
"Ho! who is your master?—say!—
Ye shapes that writhe in the slag and moan
Your slow-charred souls away—
Ye worse than worst of things accurst—
Ye dead leaves of a day!"

I am the Wind, and I rule mankind,
And I hold a sovereign reign
Over the lands, as God designed,
And the waters they contain :
Lo! the bound of the wide world round
Falleth in my domain!

.

WHAT THE WIND SAID

*I wake, as one from a dream half done,
And gaze with a dazzled eye
On an autumn leaf like a scrap of sun
That the wind goes whirling by,
While afar I hear, with a chill of fear,
The winter storm-king sigh.*

THE NOBLEST SERVICE

DR. WYCKLIFFE SMITH—LATE SURGEON 161ST REG-
IMENT IND. VOLS., DELPHI, DEC. 29, 1899

IF all his mourning friends unselfishly
Might speak, high over grief, in one accord,
What voice of joy were lifted to the Lord
For having lent our need such ministry
As this man's life has ever proved to be!
Yea, even through battle-crash of gun and sword
His steadfast step still found the pathway toward
The noblest service paid Humanity.
O ye to whose rich firesides he has brought
A richer light! O watcher at the door
Of the lone cabin! O kindred! Comrades!—all!
Since universal good he dreamed and wrought,
Be brave, to pleasure him, as, on before,
He leads us, answering Glory's highest call.

THE OLD GUITAR

NEGLECTED now is the old guitar
And moldering into decay;
Fretted with many a rift and scar
That the dull dust hides away,
While the spider spins a silver star
In its silent lips to-day.

The keys hold only nerveless strings—
The sinews of brave old airs
Are pulseless now; and the scarf that clings
So closely here declares
A sad regret in its ravelings
And the faded hue it wears.

But the old guitar, with a lenient grace,
Has cherished a smile for me;
And its features hint of a fairer face
That comes with a memory
Of a flower-and-perfume-haunted place
And a moonlit balcony.

THE OLD GUITAR

Music sweeter than words confess
Or the minstrel's powers invent,
Thrilled here once at the light caress
Of the fairy hands that lent
This excuse for the kiss I press
On the dear old instrument.

The rose of pearl with the jeweled stem
Still blooms; and the tiny sets
In the circle all are here; the gem
In the keys, and the silver frets;
But the dainty fingers that danced o'er them—
Alas for the heart's regrets!—

Alas for the loosened strings to-day,
And the wounds of rift and scar
On a worn old heart, with its roundelay
Enthralled with a stronger bar
That Fate weaves on, through a dull decay
Like that of the old guitar!

AN IDIOT

I'M on'y thist a' idiot—
That's what folks calls a feller what
Ain't got no mind
Of any kind,
Ner don't know nothin' he's forgot.—
I'm one o' *them*—But I know why
The bees buzz *this* way when they fly,—
'Cause honey it gits on their wings.
Ain't thumbs and fingers funny things?

What's money? Hooh! it's thist a hole
Punched in a round thing 'at won't roll
'Cause they's a string
Poked through the thing
And fastened round your neck—that's all!
Ef I could git my money off,
I'd buy whole lots o' whoopin'-cough
And give it to the boy next door
Who died 'cause he ain't got no more.

AN IDIOT

What is it when you die? *I* know,—
You can't wake up ag'in, ner go
 To sleep no more—
 Ner kick, ner snore,
Ner lay and look and watch it snow;
 And when folks slaps and pinches you—
 You don't keer nothin' *what* they do.
 No honey on the *angels'* wings!
 Ain't thumbs and fingers funny things?

THE ENDURING

A MISTY memory—faint, far away
And vague and dim as childhood's long-lost day—
Forever haunts and holds me with a spell
Of awe and wonder indefinable:—
A grimy old engraving tacked upon
A shoeshop wall.—An ancient temple, drawn
Of crumbling granite, sagging portico
And gray, forbidding gateway, grim as woe;
And o'er the portal, cut in antique line,
The words—cut likewise in this brain of mine—
“Wouldst have a friend?—Wouldst know what
friend is best?
Have GOD thy friend: He passeth all the
rest.”

Again the old shoemaker pounds and pounds
Resentfully, as the loud laugh resounds
And the coarse jest is bandied round the throng
That smokes about the smoldering stove; and long,

THE ENDURING

Tempestuous disputes arise, and then—
Even as all like discords—die again;
The while a barefoot boy more gravely heeds
The quaint old picture, and tiptoeing reads
There in the rainy gloom the legend o'er
The lowering portal of the old church door—
“Wouldst have a friend?—Wouldst know what
friend is best?
Have GOD thy friend: He passeth all the
rest.”

So older—older—older, year by year,
The boy has grown, that now, an old man here,
He seems a part of Allegory, where
He stands before Life as the old print there—
Still awed, and marveling what light must be
Hid by the door that bars Futurity:—
Though, ever clearer than with eyes of youth,
He reads with his *old* eyes—and tears forsooth—
“Wouldst have a friend?—Wouldst know what
friend is best?
Have GOD thy friend: He passeth all the
rest.”

THE HIRED MAN'S FAITH IN CHILDREN

I BELIEVE *all* childern's good,
Ef they're only *understood*,—
Even *bad* ones, 'pears to me,
'S jes as good as they kin be!

THE NATURALIST

OLIVER DAVIE

IN gentlest worship has he bowed
To Nature. Rescued from the crowd
And din of town and thoroughfare,
He turns him from all worldly care
Unto the sacred fastness of
The forests, and the peace and love
That breathes there prayer-like in the breeze
And coo of doves in dreamful trees—
Their tops in laps of sunshine laid,
Their lower boughs all slaked with shade.

With head uncovered has he stood,
Hearing the Spirit of the Wood—
Hearing aright the Master speak
In trill of bird, and warbling creek;
In lisp of reeds, or rainy sigh
Of grasses as the loon darts by—

THE NATURALIST

Hearing aright the storm and lull,
And all earth's voices wonderful,—
Even this hail an unknown friend
Lifts will he hear and comprehend.

AT CROWN HILL

LEAVE him here in the fresh greening grasses and
trees

And the symbols of love, and the solace of these—
The saintly white lilies and blossoms he keeps
In endless caress as he breathlessly sleeps.

The tears of our eyes wrong the scene of his rest,
For the sky's at its clearest—the sun's at its best—
The earth at its greenest—its wild bud-and-bloom
At its sweetest—and sweetest its honied perfume.

Home! home!—Leave him here in his lordly
estate,

And with never a tear as we turn from the gate!

Turn back to the home that will know him no
more,—

The vines at the window—the sun through the
door.—

AT CROWN HILL

Nor sound of his voice, nor the light of his face!

. . . .

But the birds will sing on, and the rose, in his
place,

Will tenderly smile till we daringly feign

He is home with us still, though the tremulous rain

Of our tears reappear, and again all is gloom,

And all prayerless we sob in the long-darkened
room.

Heaven portions it thus—the old mystery dim,—

It is midnight to us—it is morning to him.

THE BED

I

“THOU, of all God’s gifts the best,
Blessèd Bed!” I muse, and rest
Thinking how it havened me
In my dazèd Infancy—
Ere mine eyes could bear the kind
Daylight through the window-blind,
Or my lips, in yearning quest,
Groping found the mother-breast,
Or mine utterance but owned
Minor sounds that sobbed and moaned.

II

Gracious Bed that nestled me
Even ere the mother’s knee,—
Lulling me to slumber ere
Conscious of my treasure there—

THE BED

Save the tiny palms that kept
Fondling, even as I slept,
That rare dual-wealth of mine,—
Softest pillow—sweetest wine!—
Gentlest cheer for mortal guest,
And of Love's fare lordliest.

III

By thy grace, O Bed, the first
Blooms of Boyhood-memories burst:—
Dreams of riches, swift withdrawn
As I, wakening, find the dawn
With its glad Spring-face once more
Glimmering on me as of yore:
Then the bluebird's limpid cry
Lulls me like a lullaby,
Till falls every failing sense
Back to sleep's sheer impotence.

IV

Or, ■ truant, home again,—
With the moonlight through the pane,

THE BED

And the kiss that ends the prayer—
Then the footsteps down the stair;
And the close hush; and far click
Of the old clock; and the thick
Sweetness of the locust-bloom
Drugging all the enchanted room
Into darkness fathoms deep
As mine own pure childish sleep.

V

Gift and spell, O Bed, retell
Every lovely miracle—
Up from childhood's simplest dream
Unto manhood's pride supreme!—
Sacredness no words express,—
Lo, the young wife's fond caress
Of her first-born, while beside
Bends the husband, tearful-eyed,
Marveling of kiss and prayer
Which of these is holier there.

THE BED

VI

Trace the vigils through the long,
Long nights, when the cricket's song
Stunned the sick man's fevered brain,
As he tossed and moaned in pain
Piteous—till thou, O Bed,
Smoothed the pillows for his head,
And thy soothest solace laid
Round him, and his fever weighed
Into slumber deep and cool,
And divinely merciful.

VII

Thus, O Bed, all gratefully
I would ever sing of thee—
Till the final sleep shall fall
O'er me, and the crickets call
In the grasses where at last
I am indolently cast
Like a play-worn boy at will.—
'Tis a Bed befriends me still—
Yea, and Bed, belike, the best,
Softest, safest, blessèdest.

“THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS”

PAP he allus ust to say,

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

Liked to hear him that-a-way,

In his old split-bottomed cheer

By the fireplace here at night—

Wood all in,—and room all bright,

Warm and snug, and folks all here:

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

Me and ’Lize, and Warr’n and Jess

And Eldory home fer two

Weeks’ vacation; and, I guess,

Old folks tickled through and through,

Same as *we* was,—“Home onc’t more

Fer another Chris’mus—shore!”

Pap ’u’d say, and tilt his cheer,—

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS

Mostly Pap was ap' to be
Ser'ous in his "daily walk,"
As he called it; giner'ly
Was no hand to joke er talk.
Fac's is, Pap had never be'n
Rugged-like at all—and then
Three years in the army had
Hepped to break him purty bad.

Never *flinched!* but frost and snow
Hurt his wownd in winter. But
You bet *Mother* knowed it, though!—
Watched his feet, and made him putt
On his flannen; and his knee,
Where it never healed up, he
Claimed was "well now—mighty near—
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Pap 'u'd say, and snap his eyes . . .
Row o' apples sputter'n' here
Round the hearth, and me and 'Lize

THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS

Crackin' hicker'-nuts; and Warr'n
And Eldory parchin' corn;
And whole raft o' young folks here.
"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Mother tuk most comfort in
Jest a-heppin' Pap: She'd fill
His pipe fer him, er his tin
O' hard cider; er set still
And read fer him out the pile
O' newspapers putt on file
Whilse he was with Sherman—(She
Knowed the whole war-history!)

Sometimes he'd git het up some.—
"Boys," he'd say, "and you girls, too,
Chris'mus is about to come;
So, as you've a right to do,
Celebrate it! Lots has died,
Same as Him they crucified,
That you might be happy here.
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS

Missed his voice last Chris'mus—missed
Them old cheery words, you know.
Mother helt up tel she kissed
All of us—then had to go
And break down! And I laughs: “Here!
‘Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!’ ”
“Them’s his very words,” sobbed she,
“When he asked to marry me.”

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”—
“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”
Over, over, still I hear,
“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”
Yit, like him, I’m goin’ to smile
And keep cheerful all the while:
Allus Chris’mus *There*—And here
“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

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